

U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management

**Environmental Assessment NV-040-08-021
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Domestic Horse Facility

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Bureau of Land Management
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1) INTRODUCTION

The Ely District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing to place a horse boarding facility on 8 acres of public land located within T. 17 N, R. 64 E, sec 31, Lot 2, generally described as: N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$; SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$; NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$. The proposed site of the facility would be bound by existing roads that would remain open for public access (see map 1).

The Federal Lands Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) authorize the BLM to issue rights of way (ROW) on public lands for facilities that are in the public interest. Section 507 of the FLPMA states that ROW may be issued to federal agencies, and as such the BLM can issue a ROW to itself for a facility it deems to be in the public interest. The proposed facility would be authorized by a FLPMA ROW.

Need for the Proposal

Both the Ely BLM and Ely Forest Service keep saddle horses for use by employees in their official duties. Due to past hay theft and the cost of outside stall rental, there is a need for a more secure horse facility that can be used and maintained by the agencies, thus, reducing expenses over the long term. By coordinating efforts, both agencies can benefit by the BLM providing stall space at the BLM facility, and the Forest Service providing pasture on lands it administers for that purpose. The site proposed for the facility was chosen for the following reasons:

1. Proximity to the BLM Office and to other development; both for maintenance and security reasons.
2. Proximity to water and electrical infrastructure.
3. An area where horse-keeping is an accepted use by adjacent land owners.

1.1- Land Use Conformance

The proposed action is in conformance with the following plans:
Schell Management Framework Plan

Map 1



2) DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVE

Proposed Action

The facility would consist of the following features:

1. Four corrals 70' x 70' each, with three sided loafing sheds 10' x 10' x 10' for adequate shelter.
2. Hay storage barn, approximately 40' x 60' x 20' tall.
3. Riding/ warm up arena 100' x 100'.
4. Working round corral 50' diameter.
5. Parking for horse trailers and smaller equipment.
6. 8' x 12' Tack shed.
7. Perimeter chain link fence 1,900 feet.

This facility will consist of about 8 acres and would house 5-12 saddle horses. A perimeter chain link fence would be constructed to secure the facility by limiting public access and containing horses that may get loose. All corrals and the riding facility would consist of 5' tall arena panels and the corrals would have a steel shed inside to protect the horses from weather. A hay storage barn would be used to protect the hay from weather elements to prevent spoilage. The riding arena and round corrals would provide exercise areas to keep horses in shape for work. A parking and equipment storage area would allow the BLM to park horse trailers used for the horses, and smaller equipment that may be used at the facility (panels, skid steer, and flat bed hay trailer). A shed to store tack, and other items used at the facility would be set up at the location. The buildings will be designed to have a minimal effect on the ascetic qualities of the landscape. Colors and building material will be chosen to blend into the back ground.

Water to the facility would be piped approximately 1,000 feet from a nearby city line to provide drinking water for the horses. A power would be strung approximately 40 feet to supply power to the barn for lighting and water tank heats during the winter months.

The majority of the traffic will be one vehicle twice daily to feed the horses. Occasional traffic will be trucks with trailers and sometimes semi trucks to haul hay into the barn. Sense this road is heavily traveled by the public anyway, the added traffic caused by the horse facility will likely be unnoticed.

The land is currently BLM public land. However, a withdrawal is currently in the works to remove this land from public access.

When completed the horse facility would receive maintenance as needed. Fly tape and traps would be used to control fly and other insect problems. Manure will be spread out within the arena as a soil stabilizer and to assist in moisture infiltration. Extra manure will be hauled to the city landfill.

After the initial construction the weeds will be treated to promote healthier surrounding vegetation and to promote safety.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the horse facility would not be built. The BLM and Forest Service would continue to board horses at outside facilities.

Alternatives considered by Eliminated from Further Analysis

Alternate sites were considered, but no others were identified that could meet the criterion for a suitable site.

3) AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The affected environment is the physical area that bounds the environmental, sociological, economic, or cultural feature of interest that could be impacted by the Proposed Actions.

The proposed site for the horse facility is approximately 8 acres in a triangle shape area consisting of black sagebrush and winter fat. The western side of the triangle is adjacent to private land. The private land owners keep livestock and horses in close proximity to the proposed facility location.

Project Elements Table 1

Critical Elements	Not Present	Present and Not affected or negligible impacts not requiring detailed analysis	Present and Affected	Rational
Area of Critical Environmental concern	Not Present			
Air Quality		X		Some dust and machine exhaust would be emitted during construction. Impacts would be temporary, and would not either directly or cumulatively exceed any air quality standards.
Cultural	Not Present			A needs assessment has been completed along with a ground inventory.
Environmental Justice	Not Present			

Floodplain	Not Present			
Waste (Hazardous or solid)		X		Manure will be spread out within the arena as a soil stabilizer and to assist in moisture infiltration. Extra manure will be hauled to the city landfill.
Invasive, Non-native Species	X	X		After the initial construction the weeds will be treated to promote healthier surrounding vegetation and to promote safety.
Native American Religious	Not Present			
Prime or Unique Farmlands	Not Present			
Riparian-Wetland Zones	Not Present			
Special Status Plant and Animal Species	Not Present			
Water Quality	Not Present			
Wild and Scenic Rivers	Not Present			
Wilderness Study Areas	Not Present			

Project Element Table 2

Non-Critical Elements				
Land Use Authorizations	Not Present			
Paleontological Resources	Not Present			
Minerals	Not Present			
Visual Resources		X		Mitigations will be made to insure as little

				obstruction occurs as possible.
Soils/Vegetation (Watershed)		X		The site is a sagebrush flat with little potential for erosion. Although about 4 acres would be cleared of vegetation, and the soil compacted, there would be no discernible impact to watershed.
Recreation	Not Present			
Range	Not Present			
Wildlife	Yes	X		The area proposed is located next to residence and an industrial park. Wildlife seldom frequent this area.
Woodland Resources	Not Present			
Socioeconomics	Not Present			
Migratory Birds	Yes	X		After the initial construction the birds would be free to move through or around the area without hindrance.
Wild Horses and Burros	Not Present			

For all of the critical and non-critical elements the impacts are anticipated to be either negligible, no impacts are anticipated, or the element is not present. Therefore, a more thorough detailed analysis of environmental consequences is not warranted.

4) CUMULATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS

Cumulative impacts result from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts could result from individually minor, but collectively significant actions, taking place over a period of time (Council on Environmental Quality, Regulations for Implementation of NEPA, 1508.7).

According to the BLM publication, Guidelines for Accessing and Documenting Cumulative Impacts (1994), the analysis can be focused on those issues and resource values identified during scoping that are of major importance. No major issues were identified during scoping, therefore no cumulative impacts are anticipated and a more detailed analysis is not warranted.

The area proposed for the horse facility will only be 8 acres out of approximately 12 million acres in the entire district. The area is located adjacent to private and is not used regularly by the public. A horse corral and shelter already exist on the proposed land. No further expansion of the horse facility is foreseeable.

5) PROPOSED MITIGATION AND MONITORING

As previously outlined mitigation measures incorporated into the proposed action are sufficient and based on the analysis of environmental consequences no additional mitigation is proposed.

6) CONSULTATION, COORDINATION, AND LIST OF PREPARERS

The following persons participated directly in the preparation of this document:

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